

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING

Acadia National Park Headquarters
Monday, February 09, 2015 1:00 P.M.

Members in Attendance: Steve Katona, Chair
Fred Ehrlenbach
Carolyn Gothard
Matthew Horton
Dexter Lee
Stephen Shea
Bruce Wiersma
Ben Worcester
Ken Smith

Park Staff and Presenters: Sheridan Steele, Superintendent (ANP)
Stuart West, Acting Deputy Superintendent (ANP)
John Kelly, Park Planner (ANP)
Kevin Langley, Chief of Administration (ANP)
Keith Johnston, Chief, Division of Maintenance (ANP)
Becky Cole-Will, Chief of Resources (ANP)
Judy Hazen Connery, Biologist (ANP)
Charlie Jacobi, Natural Resource Specialist (ANP)
Stephanie Clement, Conservation Director, Friends of Acadia

New nominees for the Acadia National Park Advisory Commission, Kenneth Cline and Ben Emory, are waiting decisions regarding their appointment to the Commission and were present in the audience.

The Commission Chair called the meeting to order and made opening remarks. The meeting is being held on Monday, February 9th, 2015. The original meeting, scheduled for February 2nd, 2015, was cancelled due to a snowstorm. Thank you to everyone for making an extra effort to be here, especially those who traveled long distances. Welcome to all the members of the public who are here. The purpose of the Commission meetings is to hear and make comments about what the park is doing or about other things that are happening that could affect the park. Thank you to the park service for making arrangements to reschedule this meeting and supplying a warm place for it. .

Are there any suggestions for additions to the agenda? A move was made by Fred Ehrienbach to add under item 5, New Business, # B, Route 3 Construction Schedule. That suggestion was approved.

Commission Chair Katona thanked Stuart West, Acting Deputy Superintendent, for helping to develop the agenda and thanked him, Stuart, Becky Cole-Will and Kathy Flanders for helping with all the communications for the meeting.

Introduction of New Advisory Commission Member - Welcome to Ken Smith, a new member of the Commission at his first meeting representing Bar Harbor. Ken served for several years on the original Acadia National Park Advisory Commission. Thank you to outgoing member Jeannine Ross for her years of service to the Acadia National Park Advisory Commission.

Advisory Commission Membership Update - Stuart West, Acting Dep. Superintendent

Terms for all members of the ANP Advisory Commission have expired, effective September 2014, with the exception of the three State of Maine representatives; Matt Horton and Stephen Shea, whose terms expire February 25th, 2015, and one vacant position. We are waiting to hear back on nominations for these nominations. We have not received a nomination from the Town of Cranberry Isles so we do not know if Richard Beal will be re-nominated or if there will be a new nomination. We presently do not have a representative from the Town of Frenchboro and we are not sure if there will be one. We will send notification to the town to see if they would like representation in the future. It can take up to six months for appointments to be finalized in Washington, D.C. Once members are appointed, their term is good for three years and is renewable. Members who do not have name plates should have them by the next meeting.

Chairman Katona noted that the Commission is comprised of three members who are nominated by the Secretary of the Interior; three nominated by the Governor's office; and one nominated by each of the towns bordering the Park with the exception of Frenchboro. The requirement for a quorum is seven members.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made for the approval of the September 2nd, 2014, minutes. The motion was accepted (*Gothard*) and seconded (*Ehrienbach*). The minutes were unanimously approved. The Chairman stated that Kathy Flanders did a wonderful job of recording/typing the minutes. The minutes were in-depth, about ten pages, and were good as a historical reference. Would members prefer to have the in-depth version or a shorter version of the minutes in the future? It was agreed the minutes were fine and will continue as an-depth record.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Staff Updates - Kevin Langley, Chief of Administration

New Hires (Introductions)

Kathy Flanders –Superintendent's Secretary; Assists the Advisory Commission (*Langley*)
Leslie Belskis – Administrative Support Assistant within Administration (*Langley*)
Gail Gladstone – Cultural Resource Manager (*Cole-Will*)
Darren Belskis, Supervisory Park Ranger (*West*)
Tim Rand, Supervisory Park Ranger (*West*)

Budget Implications

This year in 2015, we have seen several vacancies. We have several positions in support of the Schoodic Woods operations. To date, at Acadia we have filled four positions but we still have five positions to fill. With these positions, there are lump-sum payments (retires) and PCS (Permanent Change of Station), or move monies, for new hires which creates a strain on our budget. We have an allocated amount in the FY2015 Budget. This is relative to the FY2014 budget, although this year we are seeing impacts to our budget such as 1% increase and healthcare benefits will be offered to seasonal/temporary employees. The cost of these healthcare benefits is unknown at this time. We have not had this expense before. It will take us a year to learn what the budget implications are. We are looking at critical operating dollars and the number of vacancies we have to fill without impacting our services to the public. A possibility will be our lifeguard program, which we are looking to support from rec fee dollars or money we collect at the park. We may have to eliminate the positions if we don't see those monies.

(Matt Horton) (1) How many net new employees are there and how many of those new employees are going to Schoodic Point? (2) When you have a government shut-down, is there a written policy here, or Department of the Interior guidelines, that says everyone has to go home or be furloughed? How can Congress shut Acadia down? Doesn't it have to come from the Secretary of the Interior?

(S. Steele)

Employees - Vacancies may come up from employee transfers to another park or retires or so forth. Every time there is a vacancy, the management team considers whether the position needs to be filled, if we can redesign the position or combine it with other duties, or if it can remain vacant. In the last several years, the vacancies have been very important, Division Chiefs, Supervisory Rangers, etc. and we chose to fill them. There has been no net increase in terms of the number of employees or FTE at Acadia. The Schoodic Woods situation is different. Those positions are new FTE. The money for those positions is coming from either campground revenue to help pay for cost of running the campground or from start-up funds from donations. So there will be no impact to the park budget for either those new positions or the operations. But we do have a number of vacant positions that we are not filling. The number of staff is trending downward rather than upward.

Government Shutdown - When the government shut-down occurred, it was an act of Congress or perhaps more accurately a non-act of Congress, as they did not provide a budget. They did not fund our operations so we could not have employees actually paid during that time. As far as vacation, we do not know if we will be paid for that time or not. That is up to Congress to go back and decide if they are going to pay for the furlough that occurred. They have historically done that and they did that this last time. But we would love to be here, opening the park and serving the public. Acadia is an unusual place in that we do not have one or two or three entrance stations with everything else inaccessible. It is so intertwined with public and private land and with so many entrances to the park that the reality is we cannot close the park short of putting up barricades on all the roads. We chose not to do that. We chose to say the park is officially closed, but if people wanted to walk past the barricade and entrance station and use the park, we let them do that. We weren't throwing people out. The reality is we are told by

Congress the government, or parts of the government, that Acadia is closed until future notice and, in theory, it was closed. If Congress does not fund big pieces of the government, in this case, the National Park Service, we are not allowed to come to work with the exception of a few emergency personnel.

Deputy Superintendent's Position – Sheridan Steele, Park Superintendent

The Deputy Superintendent's position has been filled by Mike Madell, who joins us from Vicksburg National Military Park, where he was Superintendent. He is presently on the road and should be here by Wednesday, February 11th.

We are, also, losing long-time Ranger, Richard Rechholtz, who is retiring. There has been a large turn-over in the last five years at Acadia and we will continue to see changes.

Schoodic Woods - Sheridan Steele (w/slideshow)

There are a lot of changes going on right now at Schoodic District of Acadia National Park. We want to maintain the special character of the experience at Schoodic and, with the changes, we want to make sure the quality of that experience is maintained. Schoodic Woods, LLC, a private non-profit organization operating under Lyme Timber Co., purchased that property in 2011. They have been working for several years on development plans which are now underconstruction. There are eight and one-half miles of new bike paths and four miles of new hiking trails connecting to existing trails. There is a 96 site campground with RV, tent, and walk-in campsites, and two group camp sites; a group picnic shelter; a day-use parking lot for 100 vehicles; campground office and information center; ranger station, a small maintenance facility; a two bedroom employee house, and all of the restrooms and facilities that go with it. They hope to complete the finish work between now and the end of June, 2015. There will be a better visitor entrance. It will enhance the experience for people going to SERC. And it should relieve a little pressure on MDI. We hope to improve transportation in, and around, Schoodic. We hope to expand the Island Explorer service, which has operated there for a several years. There will be a bike lane on the outside shoulder of the causeway and outside of the vehicle travel lanes. The ferry service is pretty limited and we would like to see it expanded between Mt. Desert Island and Winter Harbor Marina. It will benefit Schoodic Institute and programs at SERC. It will benefit campers, who may like to visit MDI for the day or people on MDI, who may want to go to Schoodic to bike ride or hike. It will be an important connection and we are working to help make improvements for the service. It is a better experience on the water seeing the Islands and wildlife.

Once all of this construction is completed at Schoodic Woods, June 30th, 2015, the NPS has agreed to operate these facilities. There will be short-term funding provided by Schoodic Woods, LLC, so operating these facilities will not cost us anything. It will not impact our budget. It will provide tremendous new opportunities for visitors to use Acadia and enjoy another part of the park. Schoodic Woods will be operated just like Seawall or Blackwoods. Reservations will be made online.

(S. Katona) I would like to add for those who have attended our meetings over the years or are on the Commission and have watched this project grow, starting about 6-7 years ago, including SERC and this new component, it is pretty amazing to see it actually happening now and so close to opening.

Schoodic Education and Research Center–Sheridan Steele

The Schoodic Education and Research Center in Schoodic District is really growing as is its importance to the park through programs and activities related to science, i.e. Citizen Science, education in the park and in classrooms, and getting the experience connected to Acadia.

We have the Schoodic Education Adventure which is serving up to about 800 middle school students a year. Students come for a three day-two night experience while staying in a bunk house. It is a great program with a lot of positive feedback.

Upcoming Construction - Keith Johnston, Chief of Maintenance (w/handout)

As far as reservations at Schoodic Woods, this year is a short, late season so we may just be dealing with walk-ins rather than reservations. There will be a soft opening on July 24th, 2015, with the tentative opening date of August 1st, 2015. Staff will be brought on one month prior to work at our campgrounds at Acadia on MDI to get familiar with our operations.

The construction going on at Schoodic is related to the bike path and Frazer Creek. We are looking at a delayed construction start to March 2nd, 2015, rather than February 2nd, 2015. They will close the Frazer Creek causeway down to one lane and there will be southbound traffic only. They will occupy the Frazer creek picnic area as a staging area for equipment through Memorial Day, May 31st. The construction will continue through July 31st, but with two-way traffic.

Construction at MDI will start with the Route 233 Bridge. Traffic will be down to one lane with the use of flaggers. It will start as soon as weather permits and will be completed by May 8th.

Construction will start April 27th thru May 18th, near Jackson Lab on the Sier de Monts Bridge. One lane underneath will not work for over-sized vehicles. They will be detoured out of the park from the Park Loop Road to Route 3. Traffic can re-enter at Schooner Head Road to Sand Beach and Thunder Hole. Traffic on Route 3 will be restricted to one-lane using traffic lights, including nights and weekends, converting to flaggers from June 8-15. On June 8th, two-lane traffic will be reestablished during nights and weekends.

The Route 3 Bridge near Blackwoods Campground will be limited from oversized vehicles, which will need to detour to Route 3 via Otter Cliff Road. Most vehicles should fit. Flaggers will be used when daytime traffic is restricted to one-lane May 18-25th near Blackwoods Campground.

The Fish House Bridge will be closed entirely until the bridge work is done, which will be June 22nd to August 21st. Overhead traffic will be one-lane, which it is already, and underneath will be closed entirely.

Motor Road Bridges will be the last chunk of restored bridges receiving masonry work, waterproofing, and preparing for drainage in the arches.

The Thunder Hole Construction contract has not yet been awarded so we do not have exact construction details. The salt water and environment has dissolved all the masonry in the granite work around the structure in areas exposed to the surf so we are removing it and not putting it back. The lower section was already done. We will be working on it this spring and Thunder Hole will be closed entirely so they can access it with a crane. One lane of the road will be closed to allow for placement of the crane and access to Thunder Hole will be closed. The parking lot will remain open. This project is scheduled from March 30th to May 22nd.

The trail crew will be working on Ocean Path this summer. We received one year funding and will be doing some restorative work.

The last big project this year will be Rockefeller Hall. There has been exterior damage with rain coming through the roof and masonry and where the roof timbers connect with the masonry. Therefore the exterior of the building will undergo major renovation to the amount of almost one million dollars this summer. This contract has not yet been awarded. There will be scaffolding around the building. Rockefeller Hall will remain open during the preservation work.

We, also, have money through a cooperative effort with resource management to replace significant culverts on Seal Cove Road. We will repair damaged and outdated culverts and replace them with in-kind, fish friendly culverts. So we will be closing Seal Cove Road for two months this summer. Work has to occur between July 1st and October 1st by permit for working in streams. The contract has not been awarded and we have been working closely with the Town of Southwest Harbor. There will be no construction through downtown this year. This project was delayed last year so traffic would not be blocked from using Seal Cove Road while Southwest Harbor was under construction.

Project Money versus Operating Money – Keith Johnston

Project money is a separate source of funding for which requests are submitted years in advance from other sources of funding. Project money does not come from our base funding. One source of funding may be from federal highways; work for the bridges comes from the gas tax. These requests are prioritized and worked out with the Regional Office to deal with road paving, parking paving, and bridge infrastructure work. Another source of funding may be the Rockefeller Funding. A request must be submitted years in advance. None of these funds are operational funds.

(S. Steele) These are totally separate pots of money, operating money versus project money. Operating money is where most of the stress is today and project money allows us to make improvements and maintain facilities. Fortunately, Keith and the staff are really good about applying for project money through the other funding sources.

Visitation Numbers –Charlie Jacobi (w/handout)

2.563 million visits – 2014 (up by 13.5% over 2013)

2.254 million visits - 2013 (partly due to shut down/sequestration)

2.431 million visits - 2012

2014 was the busiest year in the park since 1999. We had increases in every month of the summer season. Commercial use of the park at Cadillac Summit declined because of management actions in reducing numbers of commercial buses from cruise tours to four buses at one time on Cadillac Mountain. But there were increases in small buses and van passengers. There was a large increase in passengers from Ollie's Trolleys for trips not passing the entrance station. Overall, there was a 9% increase. Overnight stays increase by almost 12%. There has been a steady increase in the last ten years. The methodology has been consistent for the last twenty-five years. There are too many ways in and out of the park to consider accuracy. We need to watch the trend.

(S. Steele) We are not counting the passengers on the Island Explorer because we aren't sure which ones are coming to the park and which ones are not. The general trend for visitation is up. There have been more parking problems, congestion, and bus crowding, particularly at Cadillac Mountain and some other more popular places. We felt it was time to address some of these issues and decided to undertake a Transportation Planning effort over the next eighteen months or so.

Transportation Plan – Presented by Keith Johnston (w/handout)

We have some challenges with parking across the park. With financial support from the Regional Office, we are working on transportation plan efforts. We met January 13th to January 15th to frame the conversation. We held an internal scoping session where we discussed the concerns within the park and set a nine month agenda, which involves a public scoping process. We articulated some concerns with the parking and will be going forward with a public process in June and July of this year with public meetings being held in Bar Harbor and Winter Harbor to get perceptions of the concerns from the public, as well, basically to assist and inform us with how we begin to address them. There have been no decisions on what we will, and won't, do. This has been about getting the public engaged and helping us solve the problems that plague certain areas at certain times. We have folks at the Denver Service Center, specializing in transportation planning, who have partnered with DHB, a contractor who provides services for us and have been involved in transportation planning here at Acadia and at other places in the Northeast Region. We are working on this one piece at a time. The Regional Office has pledged to financially support us but money has not yet been obligated. But they will support us as we work through this with the park and the partners. Hopefully by the end of the day, we have recommendations and public support for management actions that help with congestion in the park. What are those solutions? I don't know. At the end of the day, we will have worked with our communities, partners and stakeholders to address the transportation concerns of Acadia.

(S. Steele) I would like to add, there is no public transportation to the top of Cadillac Mountain. Should there be and, if so, what should it be like? We are getting more and more concern about bicycle-vehicle conflicts. There are more bicycles using the roads. They are certainly using the carriage roads but they are also using the paved roads. If you drive to Cadillac Summit, you may have to wait for a bicycle to go around a corner or to pass them at the appropriate time and you will see that number is also growing. It could be that bikes may need to be limited on hours they go up there. We are just looking at considering a wide-range of ideas as how we can reduce the

conflicts between cars and bicycles or between buses, cars and bicycles. We have a problem with a number of buses going up Cadillac. We would like to have community input and we would like to have the Commission help us with that input. At the various meetings we are going to identify the problems and get ideas on how to resolve them. An example is at the top of Cadillac; an engineering study said vehicles over 30 feet cannot make the corners on the turns and cross the yellow lines, so that a potential accident is waiting to happen. The General Management Plan of 1992 says we should not build more parking lots. Are there alternatives to that? Should there be more parking lots outside of the park and more reliance on the Island Explorer. These are the types of things we need to talk about. Right lane parking is becoming a problem, especially on a busy day in August. This restricts emergency access and presents other problems. We really want community thinking, community ideas, what can be supported and what will not be supported so we can move forward. The first public meeting will be in June in Bar Harbor but has not been set yet. The general public will be notified by ads in local newspapers, press releases, notice in Federal Register, social media, i.e. Facebook, Twitter. The presentation will be made to the Advisory Commission at the June 1st meeting.

(Susie Homer) It is suggested, when reaching out for feedback, to use MDI rather than Bar Harbor and be inclusive of all communities.

(S. Katona) It will be controversial with difficult decisions to be made. Watching terminology is a good suggestion when reaching out to our Acadia Community.

Island Explorer Ridership – John Kelly, Planner

The Island Explorer, in its 16th year, had a banner year across the board. We celebrated our five millionth rider with the help of Stephanie Clement and Friends of Acadia. The total for the year was 503,224. This is the first time they broke the 500,000 mark. This total was 19% over last year and 15% over 2012. This was the first time we broke a summer total of 400,000. And we had a record fall season as well. Of particular interest was the number of days where we broke a record of 8,000 riders or more a day. For the first time in July, we surpassed 8,000 riders on two occasions. In August, where we have had days exceeding 8,000, we had two 8,000 days and two 9,000 days. In the fall, on September 26th, we had our first autumn day surpassing 3,000 riders. Basically, the peaks occurred between mid-August and the end of August. With success there are often drawbacks. This year we experienced concerns and complaints of riders being left at bus stops without the capacity on the bus to pick them up. This was addressed case by case. We are conscientious of that issue going into this year and the year of the Centennial in 2016. Downeast Transportation and Friends of Acadia have worked to help address these issues, as well. Drivers are a commodity and becoming a scarce resource, but funding for equipment is also an issue. The magnitude of bus use depends on how many people are visiting; when and where they are visiting; how they get here; the length of their stay and what they are doing when they are here. This takes us back to the Transportation Plan. In a lot of ways, it is a Visitor Use Management Plan.

(S. Steele) The Island Explorer is run by Downeast Transportation. They are their own separate 501C3. There are 20+ partners that contribute to the funding of that operation but the biggest single partner is Acadia National Park, because we collect a transportation fee at the entrance. One half of the entrance fee actually goes to transportation. Most of that goes to supporting

Island Explorer annually for operations. L.L. Bean also makes some major contributions for operations, plus a number of communities and other partners contribute to it. So it is funded through this big partnership. But that is the operations side of it. Then there is the other side of the Island Explorer, which is capital equipment. That funding is more of a concern because 28 buses need to be replaced over the next ten years. That obviously will cost a lot of money. But as popularity grows, we also need to consider adding buses or expanding the capacity. So this is another big challenge we are going to be facing in the next few years; how do we replace the equipment and how do we expand the system to carry more people? It is one of the many challenges the park, and our partners, are dealing with in the years ahead.

(Susie Homer, President Southwest Harbor Chamber of Commerce) In all the transportation conversation, I haven't heard anything about increases based on our Centennial, 2016. If we have those increases, and we are maxed out already, what are we going to do to deal with that because we are the only national park on the northeast coast that services the metroplex of the eastern seaboard. And if you don't think we are going to have more people, and a much bigger number than he's talking about, we are not doing our job at paying attention.

(S.Katona) And it gets even more interesting than that we will see when we get to Agenda item 5B. Let's hold discussion of this comment until then.

Car-free Mornings – Presented by Stuart West

If you look at the one and only bright side of sequestration of the government shut-down, it was the type of use the park some folks received while other folks complained they could not use the park as normal. That resonated with a lot of folks who were informally able to use the park car-free. A while back we had a car-free day. We would like to try this again this year. There are two Saturdays, May 16th and September 26th, which is National Public Lands Day. On both mornings, the park will be closed to vehicle traffic until noon and offer an opportunity for bicycles to enjoy the roads, like they did during the government shut-down. These two dates were selected for specific reasons. September 26 is National Public Lands Day, which is a fee-free day so we do not lose revenue. And we wanted to try it in the spring and in the fall. In the spring, there will be no vehicles allowed at all. In the fall, we will allow the Island Explorer, Ollie's Trolley and Acadia National Park Tours to operate to see which situation is best for the public. We hope to have some feedback. And Friends of Acadia will help us to determine that. It will only be for one-half day so anyone who has plans to visit the park and was not aware of the program will be able to start their touring day at noon but take advantage of all the communities have to offer during the morning. We spoke with the area Chamber of Commerce offices and they recommended one-half day versus a full day. We also selected two days where there are no cruise ships in town. We hope to have the Chambers push this out to the public. We feel this will be a great opportunity.

Park Entrance Fee Program Updates – Presented by Sarah Milligan (w/slideshow)

In August, 2014, we received a memo from WASO raising entrance fees across country. Some new entrance fees are as follows:

Annual Pass	\$40.00 up to \$50.00
Vehicle Pass	\$20.00 up to \$25.00
Per Person Pass	\$5.00 up to \$12.00

Motorcycle Pass	\$20.00
Campground Walk-In Sites	\$14.00 up to \$22.00
Campground Drive-In Sites	\$20.00 up to \$30.00
Group Sites	\$50.00 up to \$60.00
Schoodic: RV and RV w/Electric	\$36.00
Schoodic: RV with Electric & Water	\$40.00

At the end of the year, we sell Acadia Annual Passes at half-price in December. In 2013, we sold 1,116 Acadia Annual Passes in December. This year it went up by 70% to 1,893 passes sold. This was mostly likely due to the fee increase being made this year. Also, revenue was up about 27% this year compared to last year. Ten dollars from the day pass and annual pass goes to Downeast Transportation D/B/A Island Explorer and 80% of the revenue stays in Acadia National Park, with 20% going into a National Park Service general fund for parks to use that do not collect fees. Fees can only be used on projects which directly impact visitor services; repair maintenance, facility enhancement related to visitor enjoyment, access, health and safety, interp. visitor information, visitor services, habitat restoration directly relating to wildlife dependent recreation limited to hunting, fishing and wildlife observation, and direct operation and costs of the fee programs.

(S. Steele) The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) is the Act of Congress which established the fee program. They pass the act and we implement the fee program based on mandates. They allow 80% of the fees to come back to the park. A park pass is required to access reservations at the campground. Pricing is controlled at Washington and we cannot adjust fees. New figures for the campground are based on the surrounding area and amenities. Fees cannot be changed for another ten years.

Red Pine Scale Update – Present by Judy Hazen Connery (w/slideshow)

Red Pine Scale was first detected in the State of Maine last Fall in Northeast Harbor. The Red Pine Scale is also known as the Japanese Pine Bast Scale. Red Pine is a two needle pine that is not shade tolerant. It can only germinate and grow in very sunny situations. Red Pine Scale can be located on a small twig. It has been found on MDI on dry Rocky sites, generally with poor soil. It is often in stands scattered with other species. In 2007 Red Pine started declining in Southwest Harbor and north of Northeast Harbor. It affects the tree from inside the crown out. The closest infestation was detected the year prior in New Hampshire. The insect was introduced around New York City in 1946 and, until recently, has stayed in that location. The insect is microscopic and can be transported by landscaping materials, strong winds, clothing, vehicles, equipment and so forth. It is a sucking insect that sucks the juices out of the tree and causes its decline. It is originally from Japan, but has been invasive in the US, China, South Korea, and Sweden so far. It causes total decline of the stand once it comes in. It has two generations per year, which is important in terms of the biology and understanding the insect. Because it has two generations and breeds quickly, the cold tolerance might have changed since it was first introduced. This might be why we see it moving farther north, since we have warming winters and a warming climate. The winter is the best time to study this insect. We have only found one paper on this insect, published in 1971, so there is not a lot of research on Red Pine Scale. We do not have good inventories of the locations of Red Pine Scale in the park. Our vegetative map was created by aerial photographs, which makes it difficult to distinguish species of conifers. We

have been working with the Maine Forest Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the University of New Hampshire, and Maine Coast Heritage Trust to try to get an idea of locations, resources and knowledge of the Red Pine Scale. We have stands of Red Pine and mortality along Sargent Drive. We have learned how to identify Red Pine Scale. Our crew has been inventorying different stands of Red Pine. It is important to study this insect and add to the science-based knowledge of it. Our forest crew has been snowshoeing out to inventory various plots in different stands of Red Pine. They have established 137 survey points and 62 long-term monitoring plots, characterizing the stands. They have collected 52 twig samples. We have been getting a general assessment on the health of the stands on a scale of 1-5, five being dead.

In New Hampshire, the State Park's mission was forest production. As soon as they located Red Pine Scale, they did a salvage harvest. But they were not able to stop the spread of the scale. It is important that any harvested material only be moved in the winter to avoid transferring the scale. There are also the concerns of forest fire. The scale does not spread to White Pine, Jack Pine or Pitch Pine, which are the other pines we have on MDI. The do spread to other Asian horticultural pines. There has been little research done on treatment. Private landowners might contact the Maine Forest Service with their concerns. The University of New Hampshire and the U.S. Forest Service out of Durham have a cooperative project to look at Red Pine health across New England and we are going to be part of that study. Most of the research we have found has come from China. Our investigation has been limited to park lands, with the exception of a small location on Maine Coast Heritage Trust lands.

An Ash Bark Peeling Workshop was held where fifty-two bolts of ash were peeled to look for Emerald Ash Borer. None was found. Although it has been located on the border in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, to date it has not been located in Maine. The county in New Hampshire bordering Maine is now quarantined.

Question on Sequestration – Since we are still on sequestration, are you flat funded or, due to sequestration, are you on reduced/declining funding?

(S. Steele) My understanding, which is not 100% comprehensive is that the law which created sequestration is still in effect, which could mandate a 5% cut in the next year and the year after. Somehow they did not apply that cut to this year's budget, so this year's budget is flat. However, because of cost increases, actual buying power is going down. Congress needs to deal with that issue.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business to address at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Emera Maine Substation and Transmission Lines *(letter from D. Karlson/A. Greif)*

In response to the letter from D. Karlson and A. Greif, a resolution was read by Steve Katona. Recommendations were made (Ken Smith, Matt Horton, Dexter Lee) to table the resolution and keep Acadia National Park out of the decision, not be involved and let the community resolve the issue.

A vote was taken resolving that the Advisory Commission not take a position regarding the Emera Maine Substation and Transmission Lines at this time. The vote was unanimous.

b. Route 3 Construction Schedule

(J. Kelley, Planner) The Town of Bar Harbor and MDOT has proposed to reconstruct Route 3 from Irison Hill down a 4 mile section to Mt. Desert Street. The state set up an Advisory Committee. Concept Sensitivity Solutions proposed designs to MDOT. The proposal went to MDOT's Engineering Design Team. They have designed the reconstruction. It is unsure when the construction will start. The park has concerns about construction being done during the 2016 Centennial when there will be a higher rate of visitation, with special events and activities, which we prefer not be disrupted, along with the regular business of the town. We are waiting for MDOT to announce their construction schedule. If construction occurs during the 2016 Centennial, traffic, more than likely, it will be detoured through the park at Hulls Cove to Eagle Lake Road.

A resolution was read by Steve Katona. *"The Acadia National Park Advisory Commission supports the proposed reconstruction of Route 3 between Irison Hill and Mt. Desert Street in Bar Harbor as an important benefit to the town and park. At the same time, the park will be celebrating its Centennial in 2016, along with the National Park Service, which is expected to significantly increase visitation to the area. We respectfully request the Maine Dept. of Transportation and Town of Bar Harbor make every effort to schedule the construction at a time that does not conflict with the celebration in 2016."*

(Susie Homer) – The theme of the 2016 Centennial celebration is "Find Your Adventure". You don't invite the world to visit during the National Park Service and Acadia National Park's birthday celebrations and have it be unwelcoming. The section you are talking about is a two-way road. I strongly recommend that you pass that resolution.

The resolution was moved and seconded, but was defeated. We will count on the park to do what they can to keep the celebration going and minimize the suffering.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Land Conservation

Nothing to report at this time.

Park Use

Nothing to report at this time.

Historic

Nothing to report at this time.

Science and Education

Nothing to report at this time.

Schoodic Institute Program – Presented by Becky Cole-Will

A briefing document was distributed to members of the Advisory Commission. The Schoodic Institute will be holding the Winter Festival February 19-22. In addition, there is a lot going on with Science and Education.

FRIENDS OF ACADIA – Stephanie Clement

A lot of seasonal hires are on the FOA website now. So if you know of any students who may be interested in internships in the park, ranging from high school age up to Cadillac Summer Stewards, send them to the FOA website. Some are longer positions; summer and fall, so they may be appropriate for some seniors preparing to leave for college.

David MacDonald, along with several members of our Advocacy Committee, was in Washington, D.C. Sheridan Steele went along to answer questions for the Congressional Delegation. They visited with relation to a couple of topics including park budget. This year's budget is about the same as for Fiscal Year 2009 so that gives you an idea there hasn't been growth this past 4 or 5 years. The President's Budget just came out, but it has not been passed by Congress yet. The second topic visited was the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The President's Budget does have money coming in for Acadia if Congress appropriates the level for land acquisition that the President has recommended. This is a positive thing for our park. We also talked about Transportation Funding. Unfortunately, when the last transportation authorization happened in Congress, the funds we have used most successfully at Acadia were eliminated. It was actually combined with other monies into one pot of money, not just for national parks, but also for refuges, BLM lands, and so on. One of our messages to Congress is we have a great operating system here and we need invest to transit funds into National Parks. We made them aware Centennial was coming up. The meetings went well.

The Centennial Task Group, represented by the park, FOA board members, and community members, are coordinating community-wide efforts for the centennial. We have about 60 community partners so far that have expressed interest in holding events or investing in some way in programs for the centennial. The new centennial website is up. Anyone who wants to be involved can propose their ideas through the website, make donations through the website, and indicate volunteer contribution. There will, also, be a community calendar on the website but it is not yet populated. There are product applications. All businesses are open to design a product that will use the centennial logo. The guidelines, licensing agreement, and a request for a portion of the proceeds to be donated back are shown on the website:

www.acadiacentennial2016.org

(S. Katona) I would like to say thank you to FOA for the trail grooming. The trails have been amazing this winter under very difficult conditions.

(Ben Emory) I would like to suggest they articulate to the public the long-term benefits of the Centennial to Acadia National Park.

(S. Katona) I would like to ask Stephanie, Becky, Abe and others working on the 2016 Centennial, to please crystalize how the centennial will benefit Acadia in a nice clear answer for our June meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

(George Davis, Otter Creek) After you pass the Blackwoods Campground, heading to Seal Harbor, approximately 2 miles, there is a parking area on the left and a crossing sign on the right for hikers near the curve. There is a rock outcropping on the right. I am concerned a small child will come to the road and cross and get hit by a vehicle. It is not if it will happen but when it will happen.

(K. Johnstone) This is not national park land but we still should be concerned about the trail head and where it comes out on the road.

(John Kelly) The town put in a crosswalk. Bruce Matson was the lead on the crosswalk being installed. You might notify Bruce and the town regarding the situation.

(Susie Homer) I did not hear it in the discussion of the Transportation Plan but I don't think the west side of the island, as far as the park is concerned, is being utilized to its capacity or to its best advantage. We do not have a bus from Bar Harbor to Southwest Harbor with the Island Explorer that works. If you go back and look at the numbers, everything has increased. But if you look at the number 7 bus, it is the poor step-child. It is too long; it comes from the wrong place; it doesn't service our people; and we need to revisit it and hope the Commission will help with that and put it as part of the Explorer plan to see what needs to be done.

Closing Comments

The Commission Chair made closing comments. Thank you to the members of the park service who participated today and for public comments.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 P.M.

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING:

Please remember to send any suggestions for agenda items to Steve Katona.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 1st, 2015, 1:00 P.M., at the Acadia National Park Headquarters, McFarland Hill, Bar Harbor, Maine, as published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

Minutes Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Kathy Flanders